DCI/RM 81-2313
12 March 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

Director, Program Assessment Office

STAT FROM:

SUBJECT: Report of Ad Hoc Working Group on "Intelligence User Survey"

1.   This memo addresses some technical points about the questionnaire that need immediate attention. A future memo will discuss the broader issues of the scope of the user survey and the analysis of the resulting data. The questionnaire as it stands has some problems that could be resolved with a little additional effort.

The scales and categories used on most questions should be revised to insure consistency and elimination of bias and to facilitate analysis of the results.

Questions 2 and 3 are asked in a "yes or no" format (did you ever ...) but the categories of responses have a "how often" format. These questions should be rephrased in a "how often" format.

Questions 9, 10, 14, and 28 have categories that are not consistent with the subcategories in questions 15 through 18. The simplest fix would be to change category b of questions 9, 10, 14, and 28 from "economic" to "economic except energy, geographic, or societal".

A "not applicable" category should be added to question 9 and 10.

Question 10 is confusingly phrased as a triple negative. It should be rephrased, possibly as "how satisfactory" is intelligence support in each topic area rather than "how often" is it unsatisfactory.

2.   The problems with the scales and categories are illustrated by the attachment in which the questions are grouped by type of response. It is evident that the validity and utility of these categories have not been maximized.

Questions of the "how often" type do not have consistent categories for responses, nor do they have the same number of categories.

This problem is especially awkward for questions 1, 2, and 3, whose responses one would like to compare. Question 1 asks "how often did you attempt to review intelligence ..." and question 2 asks "[how often] has intelligence ... directly influenced a policy decision

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made by you?" It would be quite interesting to see if the user answers these questions differently, but without consistent categories for responses comparison is difficult.

In order to avoid eliciting biased responses, whenever possible one should use an odd number of categories that are defined symmetrically about the middle category.

For most questions, five categories are sufficient and more than seven could imply distinctions that the user cannot meaningfully make.

The categories "never" and "always" are too narrow for a five point scale; 1% of the time is not "never" and 99% of the time is not "always". For this reason, some people will avoid using these categories for their responses thereby biasing their answers to the middle three categories. For our "how often" questions five categories that divide the range roughly equally are preferable, ie: 0-19% of the events, 20-39%, 40-60%, 61-80%, and 81-100% of the events.

Do "usually", "often", and "mostly" mean the same? Are "occasionally" and sometimes" equivalent? Is "often" as close to "always" as "rarely" is to "never"? How often is "often"? These words are so ambiguous that it is preferable to anchor only the top and bottom categories and not use words to describe the intermediate categories.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 20, 24, and 26 ask "how often" in a sense meaning fraction of events, but in questions 11, 12, and 19 it means number of events per time interval. There is no upper limit to "how often" for the latter three questions, while the former eight have "always" for a limit. For question 11, "how often did you levy requirements ..." does "often" mean daily, weekly, monthly, or what? For questions 11 and 12 categories similar to those of question 19 should be used.

These points apply directly to the question "how satisfied" since it has an upper limit, "totally". The questions "how useful", "what quality", "how much", and "how important" as used here do not have upper limits to their ranges, however, it probably is satisfactory to use "extremely useful", "excellent", "excessive", and "extremely important" for the top categories. Again the words for the middle categories should be dropped.

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ATTACHMENT:

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how often? (fraction of the events)

Question 1	Question 20, 26	Question 24
Always	Always	Always
Usually	Often	Mostly
Occasionally	Occasionally	Sometimes
Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Never	Never	Never
	N/A	

Question 2, 9, 10

Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

Question 3

Often
Sometimes
Rarely
Never

how often? (events per time interval)

Question 19

Almost daily
Weekly
Less often than weekly

Question 11, 12

Often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

how satisfied?

Question 25

Totally satisfied
Generally satisfied
Room for substantial improvement
Completely dissatisfied
N/A

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how useful?

Question 21

    Extremely useful
    Fairly useful
    Not particularly useful
    Not useful at all
    N/A

Question 27, 28

    Indispensible
    Quite useful
    Not particularly useful
    Not at all useful

what quality?

Question 22

    Excellent
    Good
    Fair
    Poor
    N/A

Question 29c

    Excellent
    Good
    Satisfactory
    Fair
    Poor

how much?

Question 23

    Excessive
    Sufficient
    Insufficient
    N/A

Question 29b

    Excessive
    Just about right
    Needed substantially more
    Totally inadequate

how important?

Question 15, 16, 17, 18

    Very important
    Somewhat important
    Not particularly important
    Not at all important

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